

HALEY BARBOUR was born in Yazoo City, Mississippi. He earned a law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 1973. He was the Republican U.S. Senate nominee for Mississippi in 1982 and served as director of the White House Office of Political Affairs to President Ronald Reagan. From 1993 to January 1997, he served as chairman of the Republican National Committee. He served on Governor George W. Bush's National Presidential Exploratory Committee and chaired the Bush for President Campaign Advisory Committee. He founded and formerly served as chairman and CEO of Barbour Griffith & Rogers.

Elected governor in 2003, Barbour has aggressively addressed state needs. He led the fight against lawsuit abuse in Mississippi and his Tort Reform Act of 2004 was cited by The Heritage Foundation as the most comprehensive legal reform in the nation. He also initiated and the state legislature passed the largest overhaul of workforce training and development efforts in state history. He organized "Momentum Mississippi," the state's long-range economic development strategy group that is composed of state business and community leaders. Governor Barbour has overseen numerous economic development projects while in office, and during his first year, Mississippi had the largest increase in net new jobs since 1999 and the largest increase in personal income since 1998.

Barbour believes education is the number one economic development and quality of life issue in Mississippi, and during his term funding for education at all levels has increased; many of his education reforms were passed by the legislature in 2006. In addition Barbour initiated and the legislature passed six pro-life laws that make Mississippi "the safest place in America for an unborn child," according to Americans United for Life.

In the face of the worst natural disaster in American history – Hurricane Katrina, which struck on August 29, 2005 – Governor Barbour took the lead early on helping Mississippians rebuild and recover. He and First Lady Marsha Barbour have worked tirelessly and innovatively with local, state and national leadership to tap into many resources of assistance for victims of Hurricane Katrina. He also created the Governor's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding, and Renewal to develop a broad vision for opportunities to help South Mississippi rebuild better than ever.

For his leadership after Katrina, Governor Barbour in 2006 was awarded the Thomas Jefferson Freedom Award, which is presented by the American Legislative Exchange Council to a nationally recognized public sector leader who has an extraordinary record of successfully advancing the Jeffersonian principles of limited government, free markets, individual liberty, and federalism.